



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Louis District®

Press Release

Release No. 03-05

Contact: Alan Dooley (314) 331-8002

For Release: **IMMEDIATE** — January 13, 2005

1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – St. Louis Mobilizes Flood Team on Illinois River

St. Louis, Mo. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District is deploying a flood response team to the lower 80 miles of the Illinois River to more closely monitor water levels there and to be better prepared to respond to any situations that may emerge.

The team consisting of about 13 individuals will deploy over the weekend and be ready to operate Monday morning, January 17.

Corps officials are quick to point out that this measure is not in response to any indicated imminent threat to people and property in the region from Meredosia, Ill., southward. Rather, it is a step to move key personnel closer to their counterparts with Illinois agencies, local municipalities and levee districts. From these forward positions they will be better prepared to provide support if it becomes necessary.

Beginning Monday morning they will be making face-to-face contacts with local members to review any effort that might have to be mounted in the near future.

The Illinois River is subject to high water under conditions of widespread heavy precipitation such as have been experienced throughout the river basin since last week. The river is affected by a combination of headwater (upstream) precipitation, the elevation of the Mississippi River into which it flows and the relatively flat nature of the terrain through which it flows.

Elsewhere in the 28,000 square mile St. Louis District, Corps officials expect a relatively rapid rise in the Mississippi before a similarly fast descent to lower levels as we enter the weekend.

Lake elevations at Shelbyville and Carlyle Lakes in Illinois are impacting marinas and causing some roads and camping areas to be shut down. Although there is not a lot of recreation boating at this time of the year, the Illinois goose hunting season is still underway and hunters are making use of Corps lake facilities.

- more -

2-2-2-2 Corps of Engineers – Illinois River

While there have been impacts to recreation, these and other Corps Lakes have an important purpose of reducing flood damage, which they have done by holding water draining into them. This water will be released when river levels fall, and in the case of Mark Twain Lake northwest of St. Louis, hydroelectric power is being produced for a power distribution grid that runs from Missouri to south Texas.

On the Meramec, there are predictions for water levels elevations rising to about the same were reached on that river reached last week at Valley Park. There, Corps and city officials, in partnership with the contractor building a permanent levee to protect Valley Park, came together to raise an uncompleted section of the levee to protect incomplete construction from possible damage. Those efforts should be sufficient to meet expected water levels again.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers continues to urge citizens to pay careful attention to any local high water and to continue to observe safe driving concerns if and when they encounter roads under water.